

## Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-11 AID-05 /075 W

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P R 201521Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5911

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 304

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJ: SYRIA CONTINUES EFFORTS TO RESOLVE LEBANESE CRISIS

1. SUMMARY: JUMBLATT MET WITH ASAD AND LEBANESE  
BAATHIST LEADER QANSU JAN 20. THERE IS SYRIAN MEDIA BLACKOUT  
ON MOST DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANESE SITUATION, PARTICULARLY  
REGARDING SYRIAN/PALESTINIAN ROLE THEREIN.  
SYRIA BACKING EFFORTS TO RETURN KARAME TO PRIMEK  
MINISTERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. JAN 20 DAMASCUS AFTERNOON NEWS REPORTED THAT  
PRES ASAD RECEIVED AT 1300 PSP LEADER KAMAL  
JUMBLATT WHO LEADING DELEGATION OF PSP MEMBERS  
TO DAMASCUS. MEETING ATTENDED BY FONMIN KHADDAM  
AND LEBANESE BAATH PARTY LEADER ASAM QANSU  
(QANSU WAS REPORTEDLY SEEN IN DAMASCUS EVENING  
JAN 15, SO HE MAY HAVE REMAINED BEHIND FOLLOWING  
ASAD'S MEETING WITH LEBANSE LEFTIST DELEGATION  
TEN DAYS AGO).

3. SOURCE IN MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TOLD PAO IN  
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RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR TEXT OF MINISTER ISKANDAR

AHMAD'S ALLEGED STATEMENT DENYING CHAMOUN'S CLAIM OF SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON THAT AS FAR AS MINISTRY AWARE, MINISTER HAD MADE NO SUCH STATEMENT.

3. DAMASCUS MEDIA CONTINUE TO HIGHLIGHT SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE AND DOWNPLAY LEBANESE EVENTS. JAN 19 EVENING TELEVISION AND JAN 20 MORNING RADIO MADE NO MENTION OF CHAMOUN'S CLAIM, PRESENCE OF LUCIEN DAHDAH IN DAMASCUS JAN 18, FRANGIE-ASAD PHONE CONVERSATION, STATEMENT ON LEBANON BY WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN, OR ALLEGED STATEMENT BY MININFO AHMAD. PRESS GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO KARAME'S RESIGNATION, INCLUDING REPRINTING TEXT HIS RESIGNATION SPEECH. AL-BAATH REPORTED THAT "WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF SYRIAN INITIATIVE TO PUT AN END TO FIGHTING AND FOR RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE, AND AS RESULT OF CONTINUING CONTACTS, NEW CHANCE FOR CEASE-FIRE HAD ARISEN (WHICH MIGHT) LEAD TO WIT DRAWAL OF KARAME RESIGNATION AND TO ATTAINING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT." RESPONSIBILITY FOR BREAKDOWN OF CEASEFIRE ASSIGNED TO PHALANGE AND NLP. COLUMNIST JAN 18 AL-THAWRAH ASSERTED THAT LEBANESE "ISOLATIONISTS" INTEND TO DRAW PALESTINIAN FORCES INTO WASTEFUL BATTLES OR ALTERNATIVELY "EMPTY" LEBANON OF PALESTINIANS TO REALIZE "SCHEME OF PARTITIONING LEBANON."

4. MFA AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR HAMOUD SHOUFFI TOLD EMBOFF JAN 20 THAT USG SHOULD UNDERTAKE "MORE ACTIVE DIPLOMACY" TO RESOLVE LEBANESE CRISIS. HE ASSERTED THAT USG COULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN ELICITING GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF FRANCE AND VATICAN, SUGGESTING THAT COORDINATED TRIPARTITE DIPLOMACY COULD REASSURE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS THEY WILL NOT BE ABANDONED AND COULD COAX THEM INTO DROPPING PARTITION DEMANDS. SHOUFFI CLAIMED HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT POSSIBLE REMOVAL SAIQA LEADER ZUHAYR MUHSIN'S ACTIVITIES DURING LEBANESE CRISIS AND OPINED THAT MUHSIN MIGHT BE MADE "SACRIFICIAL LAMB" WHOSE DEMISE COULD SOMEHOW ASSIST SETTLEMENT EFFORTS. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. COMMENT: POSSIBILITY THAT KARAME CAN BE PERSUADED TO WITHDRAW RESIGNATION IS ENHANCED BY CONTINUED SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR HIS REMAINING IN OFFICE. MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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